



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention

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Dear Colleague:

Despite all of the advances in medical treatment over the past 10 years, the rate of HIV/AIDS infections in the United States is still increasing. As you know, an estimated 40,000 new cases of HIV/AIDS are diagnosed each year. At the end of 2003, it was estimated that between 1,039,000 and 1,185,000 people in the United States were living with HIV/AIDS,^{1,2} with ethnic minorities disproportionately affected. Specifically, African Americans accounted for half of the HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed while they make up approximately 12% of the U.S. general population. Additionally, the rate of infection stemming from heterosexual contact is growing, affecting approximately 79% of all women infected.¹

For years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has focused efforts on reaching those not infected with the virus to reduce their transmission risk and will continue to do this. We now also recognize the importance of prevention for infected persons in care. For this reason, CDC is reaching out to you, the provider, who delivers care to persons living with HIV, with an evidence-based approach to prevention.

Research shows that persons living with HIV often adopt healthy behaviors after initial diagnosis; however, many revert to risky behaviors after a period of time, thus putting their health and the health of others at risk. Therefore, CDC and others have made recommendations for incorporating HIV prevention into the medical care of persons living with HIV. These recommendations outline how, during routine office visits, providers can identify persons engaged in risky behaviors and encourage them to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors.

There is evidence that even brief provider discussions can have a positive effect on patient behavior. According to the research article included in this package, unprotected anal or vaginal sex was reduced by 38% among patients who had two or more sex partners at baseline when a provider emphasized, during regular 3- to 5-minute counseling sessions, the negative consequences of unprotected sex.³

CDC has launched the *Prevention IS Care* campaign to inform you of the importance of prevention with patients living with HIV. We've created this resource kit, complete with easy-to-use materials, to help simplify discussions with patients on a variety of issues related to staying healthy and protecting others from HIV. These materials include provider and patient materials, evidence-based research, and continuing education credit opportunities. An enclosed business reply card allows you to order additional materials, free of charge.

Health care providers do influence their patients' behavior, which is why you play a pivotal role in helping to reduce the spread of HIV. That's why we want to support you in your patient care. Together, we can truly make a difference in this HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Sincerely,

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1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A glance at the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Available at HYPERLINK "<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/PUBS/Facts/At-A-Glance.htm>" www.cdc.gov/hiv/PUBS/Facts/At-A-Glance.htm. Accessed June 23, 2005.

2. Glynn M, Rhodes P. Estimated HIV prevalence in the United States at the end of 2003. National HIV Prevention Conference; June 2005; Atlanta, Ga. [abstract 595].

3. Richardson JL, Milam J, McCutchan A, et al. Effects of brief safer-sex counseling by medical providers to HIV-1 seropositive patients: a multi-clinic assessment. AIDS. 2004;18:1179-1186.